Tahiti: Isle **of Dreams**

Lacascade, over this land in which men and women of Aryan stock had attained to physical perfection and beauty of life not perhaps known in Europe since the days of ancient Greece, and in that month died Pomare, the last King of Tahiti. He lay a-dying as the artist first walked the streets of Papeete, instantly arrested by the grief of the Tahitians and the indifference of the half-castes and French. "Tous les Europeens " (he says in *Noa-Noa),* "commersants, fonctionnaires, officiers et soldats, continuaient & rire et & cfianter dans les rues, tandis que les naturels, avec des airs graves, s'entretenaient & voix basse autour du palais."

True Pomare never "enjoyed more than the veriest shadow of sovereignty, and had indeed ' abdicated' ten years before, but at least he was the sole remaining figure of the ancient regime, Gauguin arrived in time to see him die and to hear

the official diplomatic speeches which civilisation offered the last Tahitian at the grave in place of the fervour and poetry of his ancestors. Their true value was apparent even on the road home.

"Sur la route, £, la debandade, llndifference des Fran?ais donnant le ton, tout ce peuple, si